

# PSOs for Housing Justice

September 18, 2025



**Attending:** Lauren Bennett, Joshua Perrin, Maegan Scott, Adrienne Wells, Elisa Harrigan, Arpita Jindani, Jessica Venegas, Yark Beyan, Kyle Malone

**Guests:** Will Dominie

**Regrets:** Michael Durham, Sarah Frankfurth, Katy Pellisier, Maggie Mascarenhas, Kevin Douglas

## Agenda

- Welcome | Grounding | Introductions
- Guest speaker: Will Dominie, Health in Partnership (HIP)
- Federal housing/homelessness policy updates
- Peer updates
- Closing
  - Next meeting is November 20

## Notes

Lauren initiated the meeting with an introduction to Will Dominie, Director of Housing Justice at Health In Partnership (HIP). The following summarizes his presentation and discussion on a national rent control campaign.

### Framing & Purpose

- Context: escalating federal actions (e.g., National Guard deployments, federal “surges”) against Black-led cities and unhoused/immigrant communities; fear, uncertainty, and rapid response needs.
- Goal of the session: learn from Health in Partnership (HIP) / Right To The City (RTTC) about a **translocal rent control + health** campaign and discuss implications for funders/PSOs.

### Big picture

- Two linked questions in this moment:
  - What is the government's role—repression or protective collective care?
  - Who decides—corporate capture/authoritarianism or multiracial, local self-determination?
- HIP's thesis: **Advancing rent control + building social housing** can both **block authoritarian momentum** and **build durable, multiracial working-class power**.

### HIP + partners

- HIP = national public health organization; program areas in research, narrative, and organizing.
- Deep collaboration with Right to the City Alliance (RTTC) and other networks (People's Action, MHAAction, etc.).

- Organizes the **public health field** (institutions + workers) to back grassroots campaigns.
  - Coalition: *Public Health for Community Power* (seeking to make rent control a priority).
  - Member network: *Public Health Awakened* (thousands of workers nationwide).

### Why rent control (RC) now

- Tenants' top demand across geographies: it has simple, popular, cross-partisan appeal.
- Housing crisis scale: record homelessness; ~1M eviction filings last year; half of renter HHs paying unaffordable rents—including rural areas.
- Rent Control = moderates/predicts rent increases + protects **affordability** and **stability**, which are **public health** needs.

### Health evidence (headlines)

- **Affordability:** Fewer toxic trade-offs (rent vs. food/meds). A 10-point rise in rent burden is associated with ~8% higher mortality risk.
- **Stability:** Evictions drive poor birth outcomes; child behavioral/educational harms; higher adult morbidity/mortality (one study: ~40% mortality increase associated with eviction).
- **Democracy link:** Stability → civic power. Each +1% in eviction rate predicts ~-0.5% voter turnout; reducing evictions can boost turnout.
- **Bottom line:** Stabilizing rents builds health, safety, and **political power** for those most targeted (people who are Black, immigrant, disabled, families, and women).

### Strategy = Translocal “Block & Build”

- Win Rent Control at **state/local** scale in key places; **cross-pollinate** lessons; shift national narrative; lay groundwork for federal change later.
- Campaign pairs **rent control now** with a longer arc to **social housing** (permanently affordable, community-controlled).
- Federal path = mostly defensive near-term; state/local wins can drive midterm/presidential issue salience and turnout.

### Timeline / geographies (in motion)

- **Massachusetts:** 2026 ballot initiative (signature gathering underway); high priority; major landlord opposition expected.
- **Colorado:** building from “good cause” toward rent control legislation.
- **Georgia, Minneapolis:** assessing legislative paths/2028 timing.
- **California:** multiple city-level rent control fights; potential landlord-backed rollbacks to defend.
- **Florida (2028):** potential ballot initiative.
- Main focus right now: **MA, CA**; exploring **GA, Minneapolis**; also IL (re: “lift the ban” synergies, manufactured housing angle).

### HIP roles / tools

- **National:** publish “Rent Control & Health” brief with endorsements from big public health orgs; use to normalize rent control within the field and fight **preemption** (public health has precedent from tobacco policy).
- **State/local:**
  - Organize public health constituencies (coalitions, local health departments for data/implementation over time, public health workers).
  - **Research:** pivot from long reports to nimble briefs, talking points, state-specific inserts; embed local experts (sidebars) to seed a “speakers bench.”
  - **Narrative:** translate health evidence to turnkey talking points; root-cause framing (power, white supremacy, corporate profiteering).
- **Coalition example:** CA collaborative of 28 orgs (grassroots/public health) supporting housing justice campaigns; pass-throughs help sustain participation.

### Case-making to funders (discussion)

- Intersectional frame (health + housing + democracy) resonating; some **housing** pots tightening, but **democracy/education/health** funders can be pulled in with child stability and school outcomes data.
- Education angle: mobility harms academic performance; early childhood + seniors stability = compelling.
- Messaging to “good actor” landlords and homeowners on community stability can widen base.

### Speaker’s bureau (Q&A)

- HIP piloted in economic security; learning: must embed **from the start** in campaigns (not bolt-on).
- Plan: use state-tailored research briefs to pre-position public health experts for hearings/media.

### Participant Comments / Q&A — Highlights

- **Education funders** want child/youth data; Maternal & Child Health (MCH) leaders can be strong validators.
- **Hospitals/health systems** need financial case points across the continuum (cost offsets; ER use; medical respite ROI—CHCF working on ROI tools with Quantified Ventures).
- **Coalition breadth matters:** public health, teachers/education, economic justice, seniors; homeowner stability messages; “rent stabilization” vs. “rent control” terminology flexibility.
- **Resource reality:** small pass-throughs enable grassroots orgs to show up; consider PSO roles in resourcing coalition glue.

### Concrete Asks / How PSOs & Funders Can Plug In

- **Amplify:** Share the **Massachusetts** campaign (priority now); circulate research/narrative tools; host funder briefings/webinars.
- **Resource:** Fund **grassroots organizing, PH coalition work, rapid research/narrative,** and legal/policy capacity—especially in MA (signatures, field, comms, opposition response).
- **Open doors:** Connect HIP/RTTC with your member networks; line up public health speakers; bring MCH/education leaders into the tent.

- **Preemption & implementation:** Support public health departments (data, evaluation, later-stage implementation).